

I saw close-up, firsthand how bright, artistic, and precocious our aspiring generation in America really is. One young man named Henry wrote: "I decided to write this letter because no one is going to tell me not to."

This moment of winter wonderment is a good time to take stock of all that has occurred over the past year. As we enter this holiday season, I am reminded of so many very kind people for whom I am grateful, particularly the joy of the children at McGregor Elementary School in Toledo, Ohio.

Happy holidays to all, and may the upcoming year bring endless joy and light.

HONORING COACH SHARI CAMPBELL

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Coach Shari Campbell of Clarion, who was inducted into the Pennsylvania Volleyball Coaches Association Hall of Fame for 2022.

Coach Campbell has a distinguished career of leading women's volleyball teams to victory as coach of both the Clarion Area Bobcats and the Clarion Limestone Lions volleyball teams.

Coach Campbell has also had a uniquely impressive coaching record, earning 437 wins for her team out of 507 games. Additionally, Shari Campbell's teams have won three PIAA state championships in 2012, 2020, and 2021.

Shari Campbell got her start in 1990 as a junior coach at Juniata College in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania. She later became an assistant coach at St. Bonaventure University in Allegheny, New York.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate Coach Shari Campbell on her outstanding achievement. Most importantly, I thank her for being a coach and mentor for the young women of Clarion. Her commitment to her students is not just demonstrated by her record of wins, but also by her dedication and commitment to seeing her players succeed on and off the court.

THANKING KASSIE STAGNER

(Mr. TAKANO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank a member of my staff on the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, who will not be continuing with us into the next Congress.

Kassie Stagner has served our committee both as a clerk and a research assistant. During her time on staff, she has also shown a willingness to go the extra mile, take on any job that needs doing, and to do so with incredible attention to detail. Her work proved invaluable to many of the committee's

oversight investigations. Through long days and hard projects, Kassie brought a sense of humor and a Texas charm to everything she did.

The work of my committee, this Congress, and our government to honor and to support our veterans was made better by Kassie's service, and she will be deeply missed.

IN SUPPORT OF THE RELEASE OF PAUL WHELAN

(Mr. WALBERG asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, we learned this morning of a prisoner swap with the Kremlin: basketball star Brittney Griner for the merchant of death, Viktor Bout.

Left behind once again by this administration was Michigander Paul Whelan.

While we rejoice with the Griner family, Paul's parents, constituents in my district, will soon have their fourth Christmas without their son.

Paul's family is doing their best to stay upbeat and is genuinely happy for the Griner family, as we all are. But it is hard to fathom the magnitude of disappointment with this latest lopsided swap.

We are keeping the Whelans in our prayers, just as we are keeping up the pressure. For years now, I have spoken about Paul's wrongful imprisonment on this floor. I was hoping the next time would be to celebrate his release. Sadly, it is not.

Today, once again, it is time for Paul Whelan to come home.

RECOGNIZING PENNSYLVANIA SENATOR PAT BROWNE

(Ms. WILD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WILD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the work of, and to wish a happy birthday to, Allentown's outgoing State Senator Pat Browne.

Over the span of his 28 years in public service, Pat Browne represented the Lehigh Valley in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and in the Senate, ascending to chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

While we did not agree on every issue, Senator Browne's dedication to Allentown's school district and the city's revitalization earned him popularity with Republicans, Democrats, and Independents alike, something that is altogether too rare in today's political environment. It has been an honor to work with his office over the past 4 years to bring resources to our community, and I thank him for his service and wish him a very happy birthday.

CONGRATULATING ROSS SHEPPARD

(Mr. CARTER of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the

House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Ross Sheppard for his recent selection to the Georgia 40 Under 40 list.

Ross is a successful real estate agent who wants to help buyers and sellers understand the value that historic preservation brings to the housing markets.

While many people view historic preservation and real estate development as conflicting ideas, Ross sees it differently. His desire to show people that preservation is a sustainable economic path for real estate has led him into philanthropic pursuits.

A member of the Georgia Trust and the Historic Savannah Foundation, a board member of Georgia's Old Capital Heritage Center, and a former board member of the Flannery O'Connor Andalusia Foundation, Sheppard's passion for preservation is a leading force in his life.

He has renovated and rehabilitated several historic homes, with one of his projects being featured on HGTV's "Life Under Renovation."

He was chosen as Humanitarian of the Year by his alma mater, Georgia College, and has endowed a scholarship there.

Ross resides in Savannah's Landmark Historic District, one of the most beautiful parts of Georgia's First Congressional District. He leads a life dedicated to showing others the beauty that lies beneath the surface by championing historic preservation.

I, on behalf of the entire First Congressional District of Georgia, congratulate him for his outstanding service to this State and his selection to the Georgia 40 Under 40 list.

PROTECTING MARRIAGE EQUALITY

(Ms. JACOBS of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACOBS of California. Mr. Speaker, this summer I officiated my brother's wedding, and it was one of the proudest moments of my life.

The love that Dylan and Kay share is incredibly special and deserves to be celebrated, recognized, and protected.

That is why I am so grateful to have voted for the Respect for Marriage Act, to honor their marriage and so many other marriages that have been created and affirmed in the 7 years since the landmark Obergefell ruling. This means so much not only to my family, but to the LGBTQ+ communities in San Diego and across the country.

This bill will take the discriminatory Defense of Marriage Act off the books, so it no longer poses an existential threat to LGBTQ+ families.

It will protect marriage equality so that a valid marriage in one State is recognized by all other States. Importantly, it will protect kids from discriminatory State laws and ensure that LGBTQ+ families can stay together.